

Life as a Drummer Boy: Kentuckian William Horsfall

Lesson plan author: Lisa Reynolds, Kenton Elementary School

Intended grade level: 5th

Number of students: varies

Major content: U.S. History

Unit: Civil War

Lesson length: Two 60-minute classes

Context

- How the lives of children were changed due to the Civil War
- Students will have knowledge of the Election of 1860, the subsequent secession of the southern states, Fort Sumter, and the start of the Civil War
- What defines a child? What defines a man? Sometimes (often times) war will blur those lines between the two.

Standards

SS-05-5.1.1

Students will use a variety of primary and secondary sources (e.g. artifacts, diaries, maps, timelines) to describe significant events in the history of the U.S. and interpret different perspectives. DOK3

SS-05-5.2.1

Students will identify historical documents, selected readings and speeches and explain their historical significance. DOK3

CCSS ELA –LITERACY-RI.5.3

Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text.

Student Learning Target/ I Can Statement

- Student Learning Target: I CAN USE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES TO DESCRIBE EVENTS AND INTERPRET PERSPECTIVES IN HISTORY
- Student Learning Targets: I CAN IDENTIFY HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS, SELECTED READINGS, AND/OR SPEECHES AND EXPLAIN THEIR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
- Student Learning Target: I CAN EXPLAIN THE _____ IN A HISTORICAL TEXT BASED ON THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION IN THE TEXT

Resources, Media and Technology

Materials Needed:

- Admit Slip-Day 1
- K.I.M. Chart
- *The Kentucky Civil War Bugle*
- *Civil War Drummer Boys Information Sheet with Civil War Drum Pictures*
- [Field Musicians of the Civil War](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMRYTaILXA4) (YouTube video. Click on title or go here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMRYTaILXA4>)
- Harper's Weekly *The Drummer Boy of our Regiment* political cartoon

- Cartoon Analysis Worksheet
- Admit Slip-Day 2
- Company G Soldier Record First Kentucky Volunteer Infantry
- [American Drummer Boy](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEKafzBDKY4) (YouTube video. Click on title or go here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEKafzBDKY4>)
- *Kentucky Historical Society/Kentucky Military Museum Signature Stories*
- Company G First Kentucky Commemorative Medal
- Kentucky Historical Society Teacher Background Information
- Kentucky Historical Society Student Handout
- Medal of Honor Analysis Sheet

Technology Resources

If available-but not required

- SmartBoard
- Document Reader
- Tviator

Instructions/Strategies

- Critical Thinking Skills
- Inquiry Based Problem Solving Strategies
- KIM Chart
- Making Real Life Connection
- Visual Thinking Strategies

Activities - Day 1

Activation/Motivation: Ask students, “Have you ever wanted to do something because everyone else was doing it?” Record a few student answers on the board and discuss to “spark” an interest! Next, give each student their own **Admit Slip**. Give students 5 minutes to complete **Admit Slip**. Have students share their experience with a partner at their table in a *think-pair-share* or other teacher strategy choice.

Total Time: 10min.

Guided Instruction: Introduce the class to **William Horsfall**. Give students a bit of background knowledge on William; where he was from, family, age, etc. He, like other boys his age and younger (9 years old and above) had dreams of adventure and glory. Boys his age thought that war offered them the chance to get away and have an adventure.

Give student K.I.M. Chart and Ky. Bugle Ask students “what they see when they see William?”

Record their answers on the board-*boy, kid, young, guy, etc.....-write down whatever they say*

Tell students that since the Civil War had started in April of 1861 we could infer that William had spent a few months thinking about joining the war. Why can we infer this when looking at this document? Read over the document as a class. Discuss as a class as you read. Students should fill out K.I.M. as you go along (students will also use K.I.M. when viewing pictures and video). As it turned out William was not going to be able to a soldier (yet)-he was going to be a drummer boy. This held true for many boys in the North and South. What did it mean to be a Drummer Boy during the Civil War?

Total Time: 20min

Small Group Activity/Cooperative Work Groups

Can separate students before or after pics/video

Show students Drummer Boy Information Sheet with pictures and show YouTube Video.

Discuss as a whole class using the following questions:

- Does being a drummer look easy? Why or Why not?
- Describe how the drummers look?
- What do you think when you look at them?
- Would you want to be a drummer?
- What do you think was the hardest part of being a drummer?

Separate students into Activity Groups/Cooperative Work Groups

Give students **Political Cartoon and Cartoon Analysis Sheet**

Instruct students to work together in their groups to complete political cartoon analysis

Total Time: 30min

Activities - Day 2

Activation/Motivation: Ask students if they enjoyed learning about William Horsfall yesterday? Tell them that as their Entrance Slip to class today they will be completing an *Admit Slip*. Instruct students that they have 5 minutes to complete *Admit Slip*-Review directions with class. After completion discuss student responses as a whole class as a quick review before continuing with Day 2.

Total Time: 5min.

Guided Instruction: Explain to the students that today they are going to continue learning about William Horsfall and what happened to him after becoming a drummer boy in the Union army. Remind students that we know that William ran away from home and signed up with the army in December 1861. He enlisted as a drummer in Company G of the First Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. ([Click on Soldier's Record and Zoom in on William's name.](#)) William's company soon fought various campaigns in Tennessee. William would become the youngest Kentuckian to ever receive the Medal of Honor for his act of heroism at the Battle of Corinth in May of 1862. Show students [American Drummer Boy](#) Movie Trailer (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEKafzBDKY4>).

Instruct students to work together in their groups to complete ([1:38-2:02 is when film depicts William](#)). Before showing trailer-which is 2:42-remind students that yesterday we learned that many boys served as drummer boys on both sides and this film brings together 3 of the most famous stories of the Civil War-one of which is William Horsfall. The main character in the film, named Johnny is a combination of all 3 stories brought to the big screen.

After viewing the trailer, pass out the student handout. On the student handout under ***What's the Story?*** As a class read the account of what happened in May 1862 in which William reacted with great heroism.

Ask the students what they think about the account? He placed his gun against a tree-no drum? Tell students this was very brave-especially for a boy of 15 in the middle of a battle. His regiment awarded him a commemorative medal (show students Military Museum Signature Story Page and Commemorative Medal Page). Tell the students that in 1863 William was captured by the Confederates and was held in Andersonville, a camp for prisoners of war. He did survive and was released in 1864. He reenlisted into a veteran unit in Cincinnati and remained there until the end of the war in 1865.

Total Time: 25min

Small Group Activity/Cooperative Work Groups

Separate students into small groups. If possible display copy of Medals of Honor on SmartBoard. Students should also have their own copy of their student handout. Pass out copy of Medal of Honor Analysis Sheet.

Instruct students to work together in their groups to complete Medal of Honor Analysis Sheet.

Total Time 25min

Assessment Plan

Objective Number	Type of Assessment	Description of Assessment	Adaptations/ Accommodations
Objective 1	Formative	Document/Image Analysis Answers to questions	Extra time for students with IEP's-*specific per school/school system
Objective 2	Formative	Document/Image Analysis Answers to questions	Extra time for students with IEP's-*specific per school/school system

Impact

- Students will increase skills and knowledge of using primary source documents that are visual and in written form. In doing so, the student will increase critical thinking skills both individually and as a group member. Students will also be given opportunities to work in collaborative groups that will encourage students to be active participants. These activities are learner driven and focused on process.

Refinement / Lesson Extension

- Teacher will make adjustments as needed for implementation, based on the reflection. This lesson could be extended into the areas of Liberty, Citizenship and Civic Responsibilities.

Sources

- Kentucky Historical Society*
- KET-ket.org*
- Kentucky Military Museum-Kentucky Historical Society*
- Campbell County Historical Society*
- National Archives/Library of Congress Washington, DC*
- Peridot Pictures American Drummer Boy 2001*

Admit Slip



Topic: Think of something that everyone was doing or going to. It was all everyone was talking about-but you were not allowed to go. Mom and Dad said you were too young. But other people your age were going and you really wanted to go.

Name (first & last):

Date:

Teacher:

Admit Slip



Topic: Think of something that everyone was doing or going to. It was all everyone was talking about-but you were not allowed to go. Mom and Dad said you were too young. But other people your age were going and you really wanted to go.

Name (first & last):

Date:



Teacher:



K. I. M.

Write the term or key idea (K) in the left column, the information (I) that goes along with it in the center column, and draw a picture of the idea, a memory clue, (M) in the right column.

The key idea may be a new vocabulary word or a new concept. The information may be a definition or it may be a more technical explanation of the concept. The memory clue is a way for students to fully integrate the meaning of the key idea into their memories. By making a simple sketch that explains the key idea, students synthesize and interpret the new information, making it their own. Then, students can reference their drawings to easily remember new key ideas.

K Key Idea	I Information	M Memory Clue
Popular sovereignty	Political power rests with the people who can create, alter, or abolish government.	
Unrestricted submarine warfare	A German policy during World War I designed to challenge the supremacy of the British fleet in the Atlantic Ocean. Unrestricted submarine warfare was one of the main reasons for the entry of the United States into World War I.	

K Key Idea	I Information	M Memory Clue



Horsfall was among many youngsters who answered Civil War's call to arms

With hopes of adventure and glory, tens of thousands of boys under the age of 18 answered the call of the Civil War, many of them rushing to join Union and Confederate troops in the earliest days of battle.

Fourteen-year-old William Horsfall was one of those youngsters and lived to be recognized as one of the youngest recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The Newport youth and three friends stowed away on a steamship bound for a Union regiment in the early days of the war. At the last minute, Horsfall's companions had a change of heart and ran ashore as the ship prepared to leave the Cincinnati wharf.

In his personal account from the Campbell County Historical Society archives, Horsfall described how he "left home without money or a warning to (his) parents" and "stealthily boarded the steamer, Annie Laurie, moored at the Cincinnati Wharf at Newport (on) the 20th of December 1861."

The stowaway stayed hidden "until the boat was well under way." When Horsfall was discovered, he said he was an orphan and was allowed to remain on board.

Months later, at age 15, Horsfall – listed as a drummer boy in Company G, First Regiment Kentucky Volunteers – saved the life of his wounded commanding officer when he was trapped between the lines at Corinth, Miss. At the time of his enlistment, Horsfall stood 4-foot-3 and listed his occupation as "schoolboy."

Both the Union and Confederacy had recruitment rules that barred underage men from enlisting, but that didn't stop those who wanted to be part of the action. Some enlisted without their parents' permission and lied about their ages or bargained with recruiters for a trial period, while others joined along with their older brothers and fathers whose partisan passions overwhelmed their parental senses. Most of the youngest boys became drummers, messengers and orderlies, but thousands of others fought alongside the men.

As each side scrambled to get troops into the field in the early days of the war, many of the boys went to battle with just a few weeks of training. It didn't take long, however, for them to understand the situation they had entered.

Civil War Drummer Boys

More than 250,000 little boys served in the Civil War. Some became drummer boys, like these members of the 93rd Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry.

The youngest person to enlist in the Union Army was eight-years-old. Edward Black of Indiana. He enlisted in the 21st Indiana Volunteer Infantry as a drummer boy on July 24, 1861. He survived the war but died before he reached the age of 20. Edward Black's drum was carefully preserved by his mother and was eventually donated to The Children's Museum of Indianapolis.



[Field Musicians of the Civil War](#)

(Click to watch the YouTube video)





OFF TO THE WAR.

HOME AGAIN.



Writing Home.

IN ACTION.

News From Home.

THE DRUMMER DOES OUR HIGHEST—HIGHEST WAR DUTY.

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Cartoon Analysis Worksheet

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Level 1

Visuals

1. List the objects or people you see in the cartoon.

Words (not all cartoons include words)

1. Identify the cartoon caption and/or title.
2. Locate three words or phrases used by the cartoonist to identify objects or people within the cartoon.
3. Record any important dates or numbers that appear in the cartoon.

Level 2

Visuals

2. Which of the objects on your list are symbols?

3. What do you think each symbol means?

Words

4. Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be the most significant? Why do you think so?
5. List adjectives that describe the emotions portrayed in the cartoon.

Level 3

A. Describe the action taking place in the cartoon.

Limit response for each question to 3 lines of text

B. Explain how the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols.

C. Explain the message of the cartoon.

D. What special interest groups would agree/disagree with the cartoon's message? Why?

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Admit Slip



Topic: List **3** items that you learned yesterday in class.

Name (first & last):

Date:

Teacher:

Admit Slip



Topic: List **3** items that you learned yesterday in class.

Name (first & last):

Date:

Teacher:

KentuckyHistoricalSociety








PREV

William H. Horsfall

Newport, Kentucky

Seeking adventure, William Horsfall, left his Newport, Kentucky, home as a stowaway aboard the steamer *Annie Laurie*. He soon became a drummer and later private in Company G, First Kentucky Infantry Regiment, U.S.A. Horsfall distinguished himself during the battle of Corinth, Mississippi, in 1862, where he rescued a wounded officer. He received the Medal of Honor in 1895, for heroism he displayed at age fifteen during the war. To this day, he remains the youngest Kentuckian ever to have earned this distinction. Members of his company honored him with their own commemorative medal.

NEXT

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Click to open site or go here: <http://www.history.ky.gov/military/>



Click [here](#) to zoom in on William Horsfall's Soldier Record.

Company G First Kentucky Infantry Regiment, USA Commemorative Medal



Commemorative Medal from Co. G to William Horsfall, Date Unknown

Members of Company G of the First Kentucky Infantry Regiment, U.S.A. commissioned this commemorative medal to honor the heroism of William Horsfall. Horsfall, originally the drummer for the unit, was the only member of his regiment to receive the Medal of Honor.

Donated by Robert Diab in memory of G. Vernon Diab, 2007.3.10

Teacher: Background Information

William Horsfall's Medals of Honor, c. 1895 & 1904

The 1895 medal is constructed in two pieces. The brass suspension and clasp are engraved with a shield, leaf, and orbs. The brass medal, an inverted five-point star, depicts an eagle perched atop crossed cannons and stacked cannonballs attached with two rings. Each point of the star contains clusters of laurel and oak leaves. The two engraved figures in the center circle are surrounded by 34 stars. The 1904 medal has a brass eagle holding olive branches and arrows, looking towards the arrows and a bar below stamped "Valor." A helmeted Greek god of war is portrayed in the center circle of an inverted five-pointed star. Inside each point of the star is a green enamel oak leaf. A wreath of green enamel leaves surrounds and connects each point of the star. "United States of America" encircles the center figure.

Background Information

William Horsfall was born in Newport, Kentucky, in 1847. During the Civil War, he became the youngest Kentuckian to receive Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the U.S. government, given by the President to recognize those who serve with "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his or her life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States."

Horsfall enlisted as a drummer in Company G of the First Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. Company G fought at Shiloh, Corinth, Perryville, Stones River, and Chickamauga, and in various campaigns in Tennessee. In the book *Deeds of Valor* by Walter F. Beyer, Oscar Frederick Keydel, and Henry Martin Duffield, Horsfall describes the act at Corinth in May 1862 that gained him the Medal of Honor:

"The regiment had just made a desperate charge across the ravine. Captain Williamson was wounded in the charge, and, in subsequent reversing of positions, was left between the lines. Lieutenant Hocke, approaching me, said: 'Horsfall, Captain Williamson is in a serious predicament; rescue him if possible.' So I placed my gun against a tree, and, in a stooping run, gained his side and dragged him to the stretcher bearers, who took him to the rear."

Horsfall's 1895 Medal of Honor citation reads, "Saved the life of a wounded officer lying between the lines."

In 1863, Horsfall was captured and imprisoned at Andersonville prison in Georgia, which was notorious for terrible conditions and maltreatment of prisoners. After his release in 1864, Horsfall returned to his home in Newport and demonstrated his continuing commitment to the Union by enlisting in a veteran unit in Cincinnati. After the war, he served as the commander at the William Nelson Post of the Grand Army of the Republic in Newport and worked as a carpenter and a songwriter. In 1895—33 years after his heroic actions at Corinth—he was finally presented with the Medal of Honor for his bravery at the Siege of Corinth. The following year, the medal was redesigned; Horsfall requested the new version of the medal in 1904.



Continued

Significance

William Horsfall was awarded his Medal of Honor for his bravery at the Siege of Corinth, which occurred when he was only 15 years old. To date, Horsfall is the youngest recipient of the medal, although he did not actually receive the award and citation until 33 years after his heroic actions.

Horsfall represents a group of people often overlooked by Civil War historians: youth. Too young to enlist as soldiers, but not content to stay at home, many young boys left home to sign up as drummer boys for both armies. Drummers were used in the military not for music, but rather to convey commands and messages across large distances, keep time for marching, and to boost troop morale. There were age restrictions in place, but they were often ignored, and it was not uncommon to see drummers on the battlefield as young as 10 years old. Having a child as a regiment's drummer would free up an adult for fighting, and when the drummer became old enough he would then be enlisted as a soldier. A drummer's duties were not limited to providing a cadence; they would often be used as stretcher-bearers, barbers, cooks, messengers, and, as Horsfall describes in *Deeds of Valor*, they would take up a weapon if required.



KentuckyHistoricalSociety

Student Handout: William Horsfall's Medals of Honor, c. 1895 & 1904

What Is It?

These are Medals of Honor awarded to William Horsfall for bravery during the Civil War. The Medal of Honor is the highest military award given in the United States. Horsfall is the youngest person to ever receive the award. He was just 15 when he earned the medal.

What's the Story?

William Horsfall was born in Newport, Kentucky, in 1847. In 1861, without telling his parents, he left home and stowed away on a steamship. He was too young to enlist as a soldier so he joined the Union army as a drummer boy in Company G of the First Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. Drummers were used in the military not for music, but rather to convey commands and messages across large distances, keep time for marching, and to boost troop morale. Some were as young as 10 years old.

Drummer boys also helped carry stretchers and worked as barbers, cooks, and messengers. If needed, they would also take up weapons. Here is an account of what happened in May 1862:

"The regiment had just made a desperate charge across the ravine. Captain Williamson was wounded in the charge, and, in subsequent reversing of positions, was left between the lines. Lieutenant Hocke, approaching me, said: 'Horsfall, Captain Williamson is in a serious predicament; rescue him if possible.' So I placed my gun against a tree, and, in a stopping run, gained his side and dragged him to the stretcher bearers, who took him to the rear."

Horsfall was awarded the Medal of Honor because he "saved the life of a wounded officer lying between the lines." He didn't get his award until 1895, however. He has two medals because in 1896 the medal was redesigned and in 1904 Horsfall asked for the new version of the medal.

Did You Know?

During the Civil War, children assisted war efforts in many different ways. If not serving as drummers in the army, they would help out on the home front by rolling bandages, packing treats and supplies for soldiers, working to supplement the soldier's salary of their father (or to support the family if their father had died in the war), and even printing their own newspapers to boost morale.



Collections of the Kentucky Historical Society | Accession Number 2007.3.1, 2007.3.4 | 2.625" x 2.063" x 0.25" (2007.3.1) | 2.625" x 1.5" x 0.25" (2007.3.4)

Describe

Describe any symbols you see that represent the United States.

Can you locate any words on the medals?

Define the word *Valor*.



Analyze

Why do you think the award is called the “Medal of Honor”?

Why do you think the armies on both sides accepted the help of children during the Civil War?

If you had not read the story of William Horsfall, would it have surprised you to learn that the soldier who received these medals was only 15 years old?

Interpret

Keep in mind how old William was when he enlisted in the army during the Civil War. This was also true for boys on both sides of the conflict.

Do you think William Horsfall’s experience in the army was different than other soldiers?